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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Kindly cancel claims 16 and 18, and amend Claim 7 as follows:

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A friction-grip fireplace tool, comprising:

a. a unary, v-shaped, flexible open-jawed mouth having a closed end defining an outer perimeter, and an open end defined by an inner perimeter, said inner perimeter comprised of:

i. a first straight portion having a first end, a second end, and a middle portion therebetween,

ii. a curved portion having a first end and a second end, the first end of the curved portion being connected to the second end of the first straight portion; and

iii. a second straight portion having a first end, a second end, and a middle portion therebetween, the first end of the second straight portion being connected to the second end of the curved portion,

said unary, v-shaped, flexible open-jawed mouth exhibiting a spring-like effect when the first straight portion and the second straight portion are urged apart;

b. friction ridges disposed on the ~~middle portions of the~~ first straight portion from the first end to the second end thereof, and on the second straight portion from the first end to the second end thereof, ~~spaced at intervals along the middle portions of the inner perimeter of said open-jawed mouth~~, said friction ridges creating a non-piercing friction effect upon an object disposed within the inner perimeter of the open end of said open-

jawed mouth when the first straight portion and second straight portion are urged apart by said object;

c. an elongated connecting rod having an upper end and a lower end, said second end of said second straight portion being connected to ~~[[;]]~~ ~~d. means of joining~~ said connecting rod at its lower end ~~to one portion of said open-jawed mouth~~ such that the closed end of said open-jawed mouth is directed toward a user of said fireplace tool,

~~[[e]]~~ d. a hand grip; and

~~[[f]]~~ e. means of joining said hand grip to said connecting rod at its upper end,

whereby a user can grip said fireplace tool by said hand grip, and push said open-jawed mouth onto said object, thus applying a progressively tightening gripping force upon said object via the combination of said spring-like effect and said non-piercing friction effect provided by the friction ridges, enabling the user to lift, move, reposition and release said object without manipulating any moving parts.

8. (Previously Presented) The friction-grip fireplace tool of Claim 7, further including a wedge-shaped tip disposed as an in-line extension of the first end of the first straight portion of said inner perimeter of the open-jawed mouth.

9. (Previously Presented) The friction grip fireplace tool of Claim 7, wherein said open-jawed mouth is made of steel.

10. (Previously Presented) The friction-grip fireplace tool of Claim 7, wherein said open-jawed mouth is made of iron.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) The friction-grip fireplace tool of Claim 7, wherein said fireplace tool is constructed by joining together said open-jawed mouth, said elongated connecting rod, and said hand grip.

13-19. (Cancelled)